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New York

President:	Mr. Umarov	(Kazakhstan)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	China	Mr. Zhang Dianbin
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Tanoh-Boutchoue
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Meza-Cuadra
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Sweden	Mr. Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Allen
	United States of America	Ms. French

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2017/1109)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on Somalia (S/2017/1109)

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Somalia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia; and Mr. Francisco Caetano Jose Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia and Head of the African Union Mission in Somalia.

Mr. Madeira is joining this meeting via video-teleconference from Addis Ababa.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2017/1109, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on Somalia.

I now give the floor to Mr. Keating.

Mr. Keating: It is now almost one year since Somalia underwent a peaceful transition of power and the election of President Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed Farmajo. Like many new Governments, his has been through a steep learning curve. In the process, it has crafted a commendable national agenda embracing financial reform, job creation, inclusive politics, conflict resolution and reform of the security sector. The focus is now on the essential task of developing a plan for security transition.

In implementing that multipronged agenda, the Federal Government is facing a number of major challenges. One is the mobilization of adequate technical and financial capacity. Another is ensuring coherent and coordinated approaches by both national and international actors. A third is successfully managing the powerful constituencies that need to be on side. Those include federal member states, parliamentarians, clan power brokers, the private sector and international partners.

It is encouraging that following a period of tension between federal member states and the Federal Government late last year, the relationship has stabilized. The form and structure of Somalia's federal system remains a matter of vigorous debate, but the renewed commitment of the Federal Government and federal member states to cooperate to address Somalia's needs is essential in order to make progress on all fronts. The improving relationship between the Government and the private sector is also encouraging, as evidenced by the adoption of the telecommunications act — a milestone in public regulation of the economy — and by an increase in business confidence and domestic revenues.

In December, the International Monetary Fund commended the Somali authorities' progress on policy reforms and its successful completion of the country's first staff-monitored programme since the end of the civil war. That is setting the country on a pathway that leads both to debt relief, increased public and private sector loans and investment, and to more money for basic services and infrastructure. That Somalia's relationship with international partners remains strong was apparent at the Somalia Security Conference and the Partnership Forum, held in Mogadishu in early December 2017. The Government believes that it needs and deserves greater financial support to implement its reform agenda, even if that involves some calculated risks by donors.

Somali politics, however, remain turbulent. In December, tensions were sharply increased in Mogadishu by the violent arrest by the National Intelligence and Security Agency of a prominent opposition politician and by a raid on the house of a leading parliamentarian. The recent replacement of the Mayor has also created waves. Those incidents have highlighted basic problems that need to be addressed, such as inadequate rules and safeguards governing the conduct of politics, including impeachment procedures; blurred roles and lines of accountability of the many security actors; and the perpetuation of corrupt practices and of untraceable money in the political marketplace.

Corruption is a blight, undermining reform efforts and limiting the confidence and trust of Somalis in their leaders and institutions. The effects can be seen in all areas of public life from business to politics, justice to

security, while playing into the hands of extremists. The Government has declared its determination to develop plans to address corruption in the coming year. In the meantime, all Somali actors need to respect the rule of law and resist the use of violence against their political opponents. Otherwise, the risk is that the many positive developments under way will be overshadowed, and the Government's ability to implement its broader agenda and improve the lives of the population will be undermined.

The scale of the challenges facing the country are daunting. Chronic poverty and persistent humanitarian needs are casting an ominous shadow over Somalia. The risk of famine continues to loom after four consecutive failed rainy seasons. The 2018 humanitarian response plan calls for $1.6 billion. Although famine was averted in 2017 thanks to national leadership, collective humanitarian action and historic levels of donor support, food security needs are nearly double the five-year average, and an estimated 6.2 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. Malnutrition reached emergency levels in many locations and is expected to increase. Drought and conflict have displaced more than 2 million people within the country — up to a million of them in the last 12 months — including many children and more than 80,000 pregnant women.

Given the recurrent nature of droughts in Somalia, an imperative is to address the root causes of Somalia's fragility and build resilience to shocks. That is needed to prevent further refugee flows and displacement. Humanitarian interventions must be complemented by investment in job-creating public works and infrastructure. The basis for that will be the drought impact needs assessment and recovery resilience framework, which is being developed by the Federal Government with support from the United Nations, the World Bank and the European Union. Continued support will be needed to help Somalia break the cycle of recurrent crises that cause so much suffering and undermine the peacebuilding and State-building process.

Central to that process is gaining political agreement as to how power will be exercised, shared and accounted for. That requires progress in three key areas: review of the provisional federal constitution, preparation for the 2020-2021 elections, and conflict resolution and reconciliation. The national constitutional convention scheduled for March and/or April is expected to launch the next phase of the constitutional review process, focusing on resource- and power-sharing between the Federal Government and the federal member states, the status of Mogadishu and harmonization of the Federal and member state constitutions.

In December 2017, the National Independent Electoral Commission launched its strategic plan to achieve universal elections. That will require sustained political support and donor funding. Registration of political parties will help stabilize politics. Thus far, seven have been registered, including one led by a woman. Registration is also an essential step towards holding universal elections. Immediate priorities include the development and adoption of the electoral law by the Parliament, reaching agreement on the system of representation, decisions on voter registration and ongoing capacity-building and the institutional development of the national Independent Electoral Commission, including in the Federal member states.

Regarding conflict resolution and reconciliation, the Federal Government plans to launch a national strategy in the coming months, while recognizing the multifaceted nature of the many disputes and grievances in the country. On the ground, there has been some significant progress. Since 2015, Galmudug has been split between the state authorities and Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a, with the state administration displaced to Cadaado. On 18 January in Dhusamareb, President Farmajo oversaw a ceremony to mark an agreement between the two to merge Assemblies, constitutions and security arrangements, and return the state administration to Dhusamareb — an agreement reached through political dialogue. That bodes well for efforts to resolve other disputes including in Galkayo. Several continue to simmer, while creating space for and distracting attention from the bigger threat posed by Al-Shabaab.

There is a serious danger that long-standing disputes between Puntland and Somaliland, and in particular an armed stand-off in Sool, could erupt into violence in the coming days, with potentially grave consequences. That closely follows delayed presidential elections and the orderly and peaceful transfer of power that took place in Somaliland late last year. With the support of international partners, including many on the Council, I have urged the leaders of Puntland and Somaliland to declare a cessation of hostilities, withdraw their forces, restore the status quo ante and open channels of communication.

Al-Shabaab remains a potent threat, despite, or perhaps because, it is on the back foot as a result of financial pressures, counter-terrorism operations and air strikes. On 14 October, Mogadishu suffered the most deadly attack caused by an improvised explosive devise ever perpetrated, with an estimated 512 people killed, nearly all of whom were civilians. On 10 December 2017, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia released its first public report, entitled "Protection of civilians: building the foundations for peace, security and human rights in Somalia", which covers the period from 1 January 2016 to 14 October 2017. It documented a total of 2,078 civilians killed and 2,507 injured. The large majority of those casualties are attributable to Al-Shabaab. Al-Shabaab abducted civilians and conducted targeted assassinations and summary executions. In addition, 729 civilians were abducted by Al-Shabaab, of whom 403 were released. Five days ago, the Somali National Army's Danab special forces rescued 36 children from an Al-Shabaab training camp, many of whom had been forcibly recruited into the movement.

Defeating Al-Shabaab will require both a military and political strategy — the use of both sticks and carrots — as well as sustained efforts to address deficits that lend extremists a degree of credibility. Those include corruption, the lack of educational and job opportunities for young people, weak national justice and corrections capacity, and grievances arising from unresolved disputes. The African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) remains fundamental to security in the country and can take credit for having created the space to allow Somalia's political progress over the last decade. I pay tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of its troops, and am grateful to the troop- and police-contributing countries for their commitment to Somalia.

AMISOM cannot stay indefinitely. This year will require a dedicated effort by the Somali leadership, the African Union and international partners to build political acceptability and operational capability of the Somali security sector. That should enable AMISOM to gradually hand over responsibility to Somali security forces and to enable the Federal and state Governments as per the agreements in the national security architecture to exercise a monopoly over the use of force. The current situation, whereby security responsibilities are fragmented, often privately controlled and unaccountable, is both dangerous and untenable.

To that end, on 4 December 2017, the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states agreed to develop a transition plan in the first quarter of this year, working closely with international partners, most importantly the African Union, the troop- and police-contributing countries and major international investors in Somalia's security, including the European Union. They agreed to create a conditions-based plan with clear milestones and target dates. It will be rooted in the comprehensive approach to security to ensure that planning focuses not only on military handover but also on policing, the rule of law and the strengthening of basic local governance, all of which are essential to sustaining security gains and to the credibility of the State. The transition plan will be the basis for securing future support for Somalia's security sector, and for AMISOM.

The starting point for the plan is not ideal. The Federal Government of Somalia has undertaken an operational readiness assessment of the Somali National Army and the Somali Police Force, providing a much clearer understanding of their capability. They have revealed multiple deficits and the enormous challenge ahead in translating the national security architecture into reality on the ground. AMISOM's continued presence will therefore be essential. The premature drawdown of AMISOM forces would be a gift to Al-Shabaab and risks undermining the gains that have been made, at great human and financial cost, over the past decade. The United Nations will continue to work closely with the African Union and key security investors to explore sustainable, predictable funding mechanisms for AMISOM, and support to AMISOM to effectively fulfil its mandate.

Progress is being made. The 2,400 Puntland defence forces have been integrated into the Somali National Army — a possible model for integration in other parts of the country. There is agreement on the allocation of police numbers for each state, for Mogadishu and the Federal Government. Each federal member state has developed a state police plan. A harmonized justice and corrections model has been endorsed by the National Security Council, which provides the basis for the establishment of an independent and impartial justice system. Action plans have been developed to implement the national strategy on preventing and countering violent extremism.

The human rights situation continues to be of great concern. The rule of law is weak and capacities and mechanisms to protect and promote basic rights are lacking. Forced evictions, sexual violence and the repression of freedom of expression are among the many indicators, with marginalized and minority groups being particularly vulnerable. The United Nations is supporting the Federal Government to strengthen frameworks, institutions and measures for upholding human rights, address impunity and improve the protection of women and children, and to take action to end the involvement of children in armed conflict. The formation of the national human rights commission is a positive step forward.

Somalia is making definite progress, though the risks remain real. It is fortunate to have a Government that is committed to implementing reform, resolving conflicts and meeting the formidable social, economic and security needs of the population. Continued progress is dependent not only on the strong political will and skill of the Federal Government, but also on cooperation and partnership with federal member states, Parliament, clan elders, business and international partners. When all of those constituencies cooperate, huge strides can be made.

I strongly encourage Somali stakeholders to unite to tackle those priorities and make 2018 a year of implementation. Allow me to take this opportunity to encourage international partners to continue their financial generosity, their support for strengthening technical capacities, and to be transparent and coordinated in their assistance.

The President: I thank Mr. Keating for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Madeira.

Mr. Madeira: I thank you, Sir, for another opportunity to brief the Security Council on the situation in Somalia. Addressing the Council remains a great honour for me.

I bring the Council greetings from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, who acknowledges the immense efforts that the Council, the Federal Government of Somalia and the African Union are making to restore peace, security and prosperity to Somalia and its people.

Since my last statement to the Council (see S/PV.7905), Somalia has witnessed political and security developments, which had a considerable impact on the country, and on our joint endeavour to contain Al-Shabaab and put an end to insurgency and violent extremism in the country and in the region. The signing at Villa Somalia in Mogadishu on 6 December 2017 of the peace, unity and reconciliation agreement between the President of Galmudug, Mr. Ahmed Duale Geele "Xaaf", and the leader of Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a, Mr. Sheikh Mohamud Shakir, and the high-level ceremony on 18 January in Dhusamareb, marking the beginning of the implementation of the agreement in the presence of President Farmajo, the Head of State of the Federal Republic of Somalia, is a very positive development in the reconciliation process among the political class in Galmudug. That important event, which also included a reconciliation tour by President Farmajo of towns and villages in Puntland and Galmudug, is a clear demonstration of the determination of the Somali people to strive to put aside their differences and concentrate on the factors that unite them in order to allow peace, unity and stability to be restored not only in Galmudug, but also in the entire territory of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

In that vein, we congratulate President Mohamed Farmajo for using his wisdom to convene and chair a nine-day high-level consultative meeting with the country's top political leadership, thereby helping to ease the difficult political environment surrounding the crisis, and allowing for a profound and comprehensive engagement by the political class and agreements to be reached on the way to handle a variety of issues of central importance for the future of the country. Those agreements, which sought the most suitable ways to improve security in the country and eliminate terrorism, promote the federal system, fast-track the review of the provisional constitution, adopt a unified approach to the 2020 electoral process, strengthen cooperation between the Federal Government and the federal member states, create development projects and provide humanitarian assistance, highlight the importance of bridging gaps in the national security architecture, accelerate the formation of an integrated national army, reconfigure defence forces and establish a technical committee of the National Security Council to work on police force and coastguard allocations, are central to our joint efforts to approach security in a comprehensive manner and to ensure lasting stability for the country.

The strong manifestation of unity of the Somali political leadership is central and indispensable to the success of our collective efforts in Somalia.

Extreme poverty, insurgency, intolerance, entrenched community grievances, ideological competition, violent extremism and terrorism are some of the important factors influencing the persistent volatile political and security environment in the country. The newly found unity of the Somali political leadership needs to be harnessed. It is needed for these challenges to be tackled and addressed comprehensively, concurrently and with renewed determination.

Currently, the security situation in Somalia remains volatile. Al-Shabaab attacks in the form of very crude bombs, Improvised explosive devices, ambushes, targeted assassinations and grenade attacks are being registered with concerning regularity. On 14 October, we saw the horrific example of the destruction that Al-Shabaab can bring to Somalia and its people when, in a cowardly attack, the group drove a large bomb that exploded at the busy Zobe intersection in Mogadishu, killing more than 500 people and injuring many hundreds more.

The Zobe massacre was Somalia's deadliest terrorist attack and its scale shocked many beyond Somalia and the region, yet, in the true spirit of the brave Somali people, the massacre not only sparked widespread protest against Al-Shabaab, but it also united all the Somalis. Indeed, winning the people to our side and denying Al-Shabaab territorial space and shelter among the Somali communities is key to success in our common endeavour to restore comprehensive peace and security in Somalia. At a time when Somalia was at its lowest, following the attack, we saw the immediate and appropriate response from the Federal Government. Not only did President Farmajo rally the country behind a united front, but he also called for an extraordinary session of parliament to direct both houses to strategize on what additional courses of action needed to be undertaken to effectively fight a common enemy. We also note the President's commendable efforts to consult with and garner support from the troop-contributing countries of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) following the attack.

This year is a crucial one for the African Union and AMISOM in Somalia. This is tied to our current mandate under resolution 2372 (2017), which requests that AMISOM's troops be drawn down, its police personnel scaled up and offensive operations conducted against Al-Shabaab. In spite of the burden this has placed upon AMISOM and Somalia, AMISOM's troop levels have gone down and currently stand at 20,537 following its drawdown in 2017. We have also seen the additional deployment of police from Nigeria and, in the coming weeks, we expect another formed police unit from Sierra Leone.

As AMISOM prepares for its eventual exit from Somalia, we are in regular contact with the Federal Government, consulting on how to ensure that AMISOM's transfer of its security responsibilities is not only seamless, but also conditions-based and responsible, as mandated by the Council in August. That is why the African Union and AMISOM have continued to engage the Federal Government on the transition process. In that vein, both the African Union and AMISOM offered valuable observations on the Government's transition plan and co-chaired the Government's transition planning meeting of 15 January, which led to the establishment of a transitional plan core group.

On the African Union and AMISOM's part, we wish to see coherence among various stakeholders in Somalia's transition plan. We also wish to see an appropriate mechanism for leading the transition plan that avoids duplication of efforts and takes into consideration the 1 December 2017 decisions, in particular the operationalization of the Somali-African Union joint task force.

AMISOM looks forward to achieving a realistic and responsible transition. We will work with the Somali National Army and other stakeholders to undertake robust operations against Al-Shabaab. We will continue to secure main supply routes, protect population centres and build infrastructure — such as key bridges — in order to link population centres and support humanitarian activities. These operations, however, are all subject to the availability of requisite support and force enablers and multipliers.

Permit me to remind the Council that the plan for transition from AMISOM to the Somali security forces, as requested in resolution 2372 (2017), anticipated a national army built on the basis of the principle of four As — a Somali army that is acceptable, accountable, affordable and able. With the release of the Federal Government's frank and transparent operational readiness assessment report in December, the African Union and AMISOM share the Government's assessment that the Somali National Army, in its current state of readiness, is not in a position to assume responsibility from AMISOM forces currently deployed in Somalia.

The main objective of the operational readiness assessment has been achieved to determine the current operational capability of the Somali National Army and its readiness to assume AMISOM's responsibilities. However, the African Union and AMISOM consider the operational readiness assessment to be a process that identifies gaps in the Somali National Army that must be addressed before AMISOM can effectively and responsibly transition. AMISOM, by far, carries the burden of security in Somalia. We will continue to mentor the Somali National Army and the Somali Police Force, as requested by the Council resolution, until a time when the conditions are deemed appropriate for Somalia to have a transition to full sovereignty of its security responsibility. Those must include operational readiness assessment for the regional forces in the coming weeks and months.

Resolution 2372 (2017) called for a revision of AMISOM's concept of operations. In the light of the challenges faced by AMISOM in the implementation of the current concept of operations, the Heads of State, the Heads of Chiefs of Defence staff of the troop- and police-contributing countries held a meeting in Addis Ababa on 1 December 2017. They recommended that the African Union Commission review the Mission's concept of operations, in collaboration with other relevant stakeholders. We intend to work with everybody. We will exclude no one, and we intend to make sure that the concept of operations is in line with the Government's transition plan. We need a common vision and approach so that the transition plan that the Government of Somalia announced on 4 December is one that we all share and are ready to implement. While the consultations for a new concept of operations have begun, the completion of the operational readiness assessment exercise will be crucial to developing a final transition plan that will inform a revised concept of operations for AMISOM.

In spite of the realities that the operational readiness assessment has made us all confront, the Federal Government continues to show some progress on the common approach to security, notably the operationalization of the National Security Council and the chairing of the first meeting of the Executive Group by Prime Minister Khayre in November 2017. While that meeting was held to update the international donor community on the progress of the various strands of the common approach to security, more progress is needed on strands 1 and 2, which, as far as we are concerned, are two sides of the same coin, since enabling AMISOM to undertake robust operations, protect population centres and secure and protect the main supply routes makes sense only if we enable the Somalis to undertake these operations alongside us and eventually take them over.

In order to achieve those goals and not risk a reversal of the gains made by AMISOM and its Somali partners, predictable and sustainable funding must be made available not only for AMISOM but also for the Somali security forces. We therefore welcome the joint decision of Mr. Moussa Faki Mahamat, Chairperson of the African Union Commission, and Secretary-General António Guterres to appoint Mr. Ramtame Lamamra and Mr. Jean-Marie Guéhenno as AMISOM's financing envoys. They must be listened to very carefully. They are genuinely trying to help overcome a problem that has posed so many challenges to us in Somalia. We expect that generous contributions will come out of their efforts. Their role will be crucial in the coming months as our partners deliberate on AMISOM's funding and as the two envoys set out the parameters for possible options for that funding in the future, as well as that of the Somali National Army.

The President: I thank Mr. Madeira for his briefing.

I now give the floor to those Council members who wish to make statements.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We would like to thank Mr. Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and Mr. Francisco Madeira, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission for Somalia, for their detailed and informative briefings today.

We would first like to commend the joint work being done by the United Nations and the African Union in Somalia. Their deployment of civilian, military and police personnel in peacebuilding efforts — rebuilding the State, strengthening the rule of law, reforming the security sector and other essential objectives — is crucial to the quest for stability and security in the subregion. We believe that the support and assistance efforts of the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the United Nation Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM) and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia must be conducted with a high degree of transparency as well as greater and better coordination and information exchanges.

In that regard, the road map for political stabilization in Somalia is crucial, consisting principally of formalizing the statute of the federal member states, implementing the security strategy, and building resilience and promoting socioeconomic change, which requires the Somali Government to define its priorities within the framework of its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. With regard to Somalia's socioeconomic transformation, we believe that in order to ensure lasting and sustainable peace and make the Somali State less fragile, it is essential not only to reform the security sector but also to work to restructure its foreign debt, since in the post-conflict phase there can be no sustainable peace without development and there will be no development at all if the debt issue is not resolved. With regard to security-sector reform, Somali ownership is essential, based on a relationship of trust, consensus and inclusivity on the part of both the Federal Government and the federal states. In that regard, we want to emphasize UNSOM's important role in supporting the National Security Council, which we consider crucial to improving capacities in the areas of demobilization, reintegration and disarmament, as well as the handling of arms, maritime security and strengthening the country's police forces.

Bolivia fully supports the efforts of the African Union to implement all initiatives for mediation, preventive diplomacy and dialogue aimed at arriving at peaceful and sustainable solutions to conflicts. In that regard, we would like to highlight the work of AMISOM and its personnel, some of whom have sacrificed their lives in fulfilling their mandate. The Security Council and the United Nations must continue helping to strengthen its capacity so that Somalia's security forces can take on full responsibility for the maintenance of security in their country as soon as possible.

We are very concerned about the threat that Al-Shabaab continues to pose in Somalia, constantly endangering the process of political stabilization and increasing tensions in the subregion through its deadly and complex attacks on innocent civilians, the Somali security forces and AMISOM. The attacks have once again demonstrated the impact of this terrorist group and the importance of coming up with measures to counter its threats, especially in Mogadishu, where attacks such as the one that occurred on 14 October of last year have resulted in the loss of hundreds of innocent lives and great material damage due to the use of improvised explosive devices, car bombs and large-calibre weapons.

We are also concerned about the continued precarious humanitarian situation. The abduction, recruitment and indoctrination of child soldiers persist, as does sexual violence against women and girls, especially those who have suffered forced displacement. We appreciate UNSOM's coordination with the United Nations Development Programme in implementing support programmes for protecting the victims of sexual violence and establishing preventive measures. At the same time, the risk of famine is having serious consequences for the most vulnerable sectors of the population. In that regard, Bolivia condemns anyone who obstructs humanitarian aid and demands that the parties permit and facilitate the people's full and speedy access to supplies.

In conclusion, we urge the international community to continue working in close coordination with the United Nations and the African Union in the interests of consolidating peace, stability and security in Somalia through inclusive dialogue and the implementation of effective security mechanisms that will enable it once and for all to eliminate threats to the peace process and above all to the entire Somali people.

Mr. Meza-Cuadra (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the holding of this briefing and express our gratitude to Mr. Michael Keating, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Somalia and Head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM), for his comprehensive briefing. We also appreciate the briefing by the Special Representative of the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Mr. Francisco Caetano Jose Madeira.

Peru supports the goal of achieving sustainable peace in Somalia and vigorously condemns the terrorist barbarism of Al-Shabaab. We also express our concern about the serious human rights violations seen in the country, especially the rights of boys and girls, many of whom are victims of recruiting.

We also we want to recognize the progress made by Somalia and the efforts of the new Government, specifically in the process of building a federal State, including the outline of a national security strategy, despite the difficult circumstances and the fact that much remains to be done in Somalia. We commend the dialogue between the Federal Government and the federal member states on, inter alia, agreeing on the

principles that should form the basis of that strategy. We also welcome the establishment of the National Security Council. We believe it is critical that there be a gradual and orderly transition of responsibilities in the area of security from the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) to Somali authorities, while ensuring that they be properly prepared to respond adequately to existing threats.

Along the same lines, we commend the steps taken towards the building of a Somali police service and the Somali National Army. My delegation is convinced that, in addition to those institutions, joint and coordinated action is necessary at all levels of Government. It is key to continue building trust between the Federal Government and the federal member states, as well as to provide them with stability and predictability in distributing roles and responsibilities among them. In that regard, we believe an overhaul of the Constitution is critical to resolve key issues of the conflict. We welcome the adoption of a road map, and we stress the need to agree on a division of powers and a model for managing and controlling natural resources and distributing income.

The political divisions that have existed in Somalia are perhaps the biggest obstacle to the reforms the country needs. National reconciliation should be understood as a grassroots-driven process that is initiated by society from the local level to the federal level. We believe it is appropriate to evaluate the possibility of beginning parallel preparations for universal elections in 2020 and 2021. We believe that encouraging greater participation by women and young people in the elections could have a substantial impact on consolidating a national agenda focused on sustainable development in the country. Those efforts must go hand in hand with affirmative policies in the areas of human rights and international humanitarian law for the entire population.

We recognize the significant contributions of AMISOM, UNSOM and the United Nations Support Office in Somalia (UNSOS) and their partners in bringing about peace and stability in the country. We believe that it is important to provide predictable and sustainable financing for AMISOM in order to avert risks related to a premature or sudden drawdown, as it is quite possible that that would reverse the substantial political progress made over the past decade. It is also important to maintain coordinated efforts among AMISOM, UNSOM and UNSOS and the countries that contribute to the peace process. In that regard, it is worrying that differences among some countries in the Middle East may be accentuating the differences between the central Government and the federal member states.

Moreover, we would like to commend the initiative to complement the response to the humanitarian crisis in Somalia with a preventive perspective. The drought needs assessment will help the Federal Government understand the factors that contribute to the vulnerability of the country.

Lastly, given this situation, it is important to bear in mind that more than half of the working-age population, most of whom are young people, are currently unemployed — a situation exacerbated by the return of 400,000 refugees. We therefore commend the fact that the Government has launched a national development plan aimed at promoting the recovery of the Somali economy and tackling the deep-seated causes of the conflict, and we hope it will receive the support of the international community.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Somalia.

Mr. Osman (Somalia): Please allow me to begin by congratulating you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council for this month. I would also like to acknowledge the successful tenure of your predecessor and the positive role he played in leading the Council last month.

The Federal Government of Somalia is committed to making continuous progress on security and financial reform. There has been much progress since the Somalia Security Conference, including a plan for the plan within the deadline, which was developed in close cooperation with the federal member states. The relationship between the Federal Government of Somalia and the federal member states is strong, as demonstrated by President Mohamed Abdullahi Farmajo's current peace tour in the north-eastern and central regions of Somalia and his visit to Galkayo with President Xaaf of Galmudug and President Gaas of Puntland. During this week's peace tour, President Farmajo visited several towns in Puntland and Galmudug states and held crucial meetings with state leaders, elders, civil society groups and politicians on the reconciliation process. The meeting that led to the agreement between Ahlu Sunna Wal Jama'a and Galmudug was another milestone. There has also been close collaboration with the federal member

states on economic recovery, including dealing with anti-corruption issues and reform. A path to inclusive politics has been charted, and discussions will now also include security sector reform.

However, the existing arms embargo framework on Somalia is major obstacle to the effective implementation of our ambitious security sector reform plans. The current arms embargo supports a disjointed supply of weapons and ammunition to various different security sector entities or federal member states, without the knowledge or the approval of the Government. That contributes to fragmenting our country and jeopardizes our peacebuilding, our political progress and, above all, the unity of Somalia.

There may be a rationale for limited specific exemptions, but the arms embargo framework must be closely aligned with the Somali security architecture. The Monitoring Group, in its Implementation Assistance Notice No. 2 of 2016, recognizes those concerns and provides recommendations to the Security Council, which have to date not been implemented. We are a fragile, recovering State, and it is critical that all members of the Security Council play their part in influencing a reduction in the micromanaging and current destabilizing levels of foreign interference in our internal affairs, especially with regard to the ongoing Gulf crisis. Needless to say, we see those concerns as an affront to our sovereignty and independence. In the past, there was less clarity on security than on economic and political reform; but our national security architecture now provides a comprehensive approach.

The devastating truck bomb explosion of 14 October at a major junction in Mogadishu, which destroyed property and killed over 500 innocent civilians, with more than 200 injured or missing, was regarded as the biggest and deadliest vehicle-borne improvised explosive device terrorist attack in the world's history. That event again served to underscore the Al-Shabaab terrorist group's ability to stage large-scale attacks, despite months-long offensives against it by the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) and the Somali National Army (SNA). Somalia will forever remember that dark day in our history. The Somali people and our Government are more united than ever in the fight against Al-Shabaab.

After the attack, on 11 November, the Prime Minister chaired the first meeting of the executive group on a comprehensive approach to security. Each of the group's strands is led by a relevant member from a federal ministry, with the support of international partners, including AMISOM, the European Union, the Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom and the United States. A critical priority is to enable AMISOM operations by enhancing its operational effectiveness and providing predictable and sustainable funding. In that regard, it is crucial to listen to, and to take into due consideration, the joint message of the African Union and United Nations envoys on the AMISOM funding consultations.

Moreover, the recently conducted operational readiness assessment revealed that the Somali National Army lacked the properly trained manpower, barracks, weapons and ammunition, as well as logistical support. The Somali National Army needs to be capacitated in all fields — training, equipment, mobility and weapons — to be able to inherit, hold and preserve the gains achieved. Without support against the constraints I mentioned, the transition from AMISOM to the Somali national security forces will be a mirage. The transition from AMISOM to the SNA should be conditions-based.

We take this opportunity to pay special tribute to the African Union. Ten years ago, Somalia was in a very different position, and Somalis everywhere are grateful to AMISOM for the sacrifices made to help our people. Somalia needs AMISOM for the transition and the continued support of our partners in building the Somali national security forces, based on our national security architecture and the outcome of the operational readiness assessment.

The Federal Government of Somalia is committed to carrying out democratic, transparent and credible elections by 2020-2021 under the leadership of President Farmajo. The holding of the elections in 2020-2021 is clearly articulated in the provisional constitution of the Federal Republic of Somalia. The political road map emphasizes that democratization is an essential component in building a viable State. The road map sets out the critical steps necessary to achieve the envisaged credible direct elections in 2020-2021, with a division of roles, responsibilities and timelines of the different constitutionally mandated institutions of the Government. Accompanying the road map is a logical framework matrix to monitor and evaluate progress, on a weekly basis, on the political benchmarks of all the relevant institutions by the Cabinet subcommittee for inclusive politics, chaired by the Prime Minister.

I would like to draw the attention of the Security Council to the looming humanitarian crisis in Somalia. According to United Nations specialized agencies, 6.2 million people are still in need of humanitarian assistance due to the drought and the conflict in Somalia. The agencies are particularly concerned that the below-average rainfalls for a fourth consecutive season and the forecast indications of a fifth consecutive below-average season indicate that the risk of famine remains in many parts of Somalia in 2018. We also remain concerned about the more than 1 million people who have been newly displaced, in addition to the 1.2 million already in a state of protracted displacement. We thank our partners for their continued support and strongly appeal to their generosity in taking the necessary actions, including the provision of resources, to ensure the continued delivery of urgent humanitarian relief.

To conclude, my delegation wishes once again to express to the Council the gratitude of the Somali people and their Government for the efforts of the United Nations to ensure peace and stability in their country. I would also like to reiterate my Government's commitment to implementing its economic, political and security reforms. The road to final peace may be long and difficult but, with the support of our partners, we are optimistic that we will continue on the path to peace, progress and prosperity.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 11.05 a.m.